

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-07 DLOS-09 EURE-00 SSO-00
NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 /069 W
-----114919 191417Z /53

O R 191337Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4105
INFO USDOD WASHDC FOR JCS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 3329

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, PBOR, UR, NO
SUBJECT: ALLEGED US POSITION ON NORWEGIAN/SOVIET GREY ZONE FISHERIES
AGREEMENT

REF: OSLO 3174

1. FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMENTATOR NILS MORTEN UDGAARD OF NORWAY'S
LEADING DAILY, AFTENPOSTEN, CALLED CHARGE MORNING OF JULY 19
REQUESTING COMMENT ON STORY BY NORWEGIAN STATE RADIO NRK TO THE
EFFECT THAT USG PERCEIVES NO PROBLEM WITH PENDING NORWEGIAN/
SOVIET "GREY ZONE" FISHERIES AGREEMENT.

2. NRK STORY DATED LINED NEW YORK REFERS TO FRYDENLUND VISIT TO
WASHINGTON AND STATES THAT NRK HAS LEARNED THE FOLLOWING:

(A) THE US JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF HAVE DISCUSSED THE AGREEMENT AND
HAVE NO OBJECTIONS FROM A MILITARY STRATEGIC POINT OF VIEW TO THE
PROPOSED FISHERIES AGREEMENT, (B) THE US HAS PLACED MUCH EM-
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PHASIS ON THE SOVIETS' WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT JOINT JURISDICTION
OF LARGE AREA EAST OF SECTOR LINE, (C) FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND
DISCUSSED THE GREY ZONE PROPOSAL DURING HIS WASHINGTON VISIT WITH-
OUT RECEIVING ANY SUBSTANTIAL OBJECTION TO THE AGREEMENT FROM
US OFFICIALS. THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE TAKEN
THE AGREEMENT UNDER ADVISEMENT.

3. UDGAARD ASKED CHARGE IF THE NRK REPORT WAS AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE USG POSITION, OR IF NOT, WHAT THE US POSITION IN FACT WAS ON THE GREY ZONE PROPOSAL. UDGAARD SAID AFTENPOSTEN WANTED TO WRITE ABOUT THE STORY TODAY. CHARGE NOTED THAT HE HAD NOT HEARD ABOUT NRK BROADCAST AND THEREFORE COULD NOT COMMENT ON IT. MOREOVER, HE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK WITH WASHINGTON ON ALLEGED JCS AND USG VIEWS ON GREY ZONE. TIME DIFFERENCE APPEARED TO RULE OUT A USG COMMENT UNTIL LATER IN THE DAY. UDGAARD AGREED TO HOLD COMMENT UNTIL JULY 20 MORNING EDITION (DEADLINE FOR WHICH IS 2100 OSLO TIME JULY 19).

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES USG SHOULD AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO PUBLIC NORWEGIAN DISCUSSION OF GREY ZONE AND SHOULD NOT TAKE A PUBLIC POSITION, WHETHER ON MILITARY, STRATEGIC OR POLITICAL GROUNDS, ABOUT THE AGREEMENT. THE PROPOSAL HAS ENGENDERED SERIOUS DIFFERENCES AMONG NORWEGIAN POLITICAL FIGURES AND MAY WELL BECOME AN ISSUE IN THE FORTHCOMING (SEPT 12) GENERAL ELECTION. WE HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN BY TAKING SIDES IN THAT DEBATE. NOR CAN WE REFUSE TO COMMENT, SINCE THAT MAY FEED PRESS SPECULATION HERE ABOUT ALLEGED US POSITION ON THE GREY ZONE NEGOTIATIONS.

5. WE PROPOSE, THEREFORE, TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO THE PRESS:

THE PROPOSED FISHERIES AGREEMENT IS A BILATERAL
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MATTER BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR. THE USG DOES NOT BELIEVE IT APPROPRIATE TO COMMENT ON SUCH BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN A NATO ALLY AND A THIRD COUNTRY.

6. A MORE DIFFICULT FOLLOW ON QUESTION WE ANTICIPATE IS WHAT OUR POSITION IS ON THE ULTIMATE LOCATION OF THE NORWEGIAN-SOVIET BOUNDARY. WE NOTE THAT OUR PRESENT POLICY -- AS OUTLINED IN OUR MAY 7, 1976 AIDE-MEMOIRE -- IS TO URGE NORWAY TO CONTINUE TO REJECT SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO USE THE SECTOR LINE APPROACH. THE DRAFT FISHERIES ACCORD, AS WE HAVE REPORTED, MAY PREJUDICE THE LOCATION OF THE FINAL BOUNDARY LINE IN THE DIRECTION OF A SECTOR LINE. IRRESPECTIVE OF OUR PRIVATE VIEWS ON THE MATTER, HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES USG SHOULD RESPOND TO THIS LINE OF QUESTIONING, TOO, BY NOTING THAT THE BOUNDARY MATTER IS A BILATERAL ISSUE ON WHICH USG COMMENT IS NOT APPROPRIATE.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S AUTHORIZATION BY 2000 OSLO TIME, JULY 19 FOR EMBASSY TO MAKE THE POINTS IN PARA 4 AND IF ASKED PARA 5.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FISHERIES, AGREEMENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTION, WATER BOUNDARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977OSLO03329
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770268-0514
Format: TEL
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770743/aaaabkrz.tel
Line Count: 115
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1c659a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 OSLO 3174
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1818807
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGED US POSITION ON NORWEGIAN/SOVIET GREY ZONE FISHERIES AGREEMENT
TAGS: EFIS, PBOR, UR, NO, (UDGAARD, NILS MORTEN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1c659a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009